

BRANCHES

A Publication of **Muskegon County Cooperating Churches**
Convening the Community of Faith
to serve the needs of the people of Muskegon County for over 70 years.

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 12:30-2:30pm Friday Closed

Hours may vary depending on the work load, please call first.

MCCC is a non-profit ecumenical organization serving all faith congregations in Muskegon County

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FRAUENTHAL
CENTER

AN EVENING WITH REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Muskegon Community College's *Center for Experiential Learning* in partnership with Rev. Stephon Ferguson will present a 75-minute program featuring the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr. **7:00-8:30pm Thursday, October 5 at the Frauenthal Center, 425 West Western Ave., Muskegon.**

The presentation will feature an in-character interview discussing the life of Dr. King. Rev. Ferguson will lead a narrated talk with visuals outlining Dr. King's life. He will be accompanied in performance by MCC History Professor, George Maniates posing topical interview questions guiding the presentation toward a meaningful learning experience for guests of all ages.

The event is offered at no charge, but tickets are required. Tickets will be available at the Frauenthal Box Office beginning 8/21/2017. Contact Kurt Troutman for further information or even a presentation about the project. kurt.troutman@muskegoncc.edu or phone him at 231-286-3075.

Muskegon area faith communities and individuals are strongly encouraged to provide financial support for this worthy project. Please send your check or money order to "**Foundation for MCC**" with a note on the bottom designating that the gift is for "MLK." Please send your gifts to: Att. Amy Swope, foundation Director, Foundation for Muskegon Community College, 221 S. Quarterline Dr., Ste. 400, Muskegon, MI 49442.

"Gleanings" by Tom Wagner**QUIET STRENGTH**

I greatly enjoy early morning, especially during these long summer days. Visually, I get to witness the gentle drama of the night sky surrendering to daylight. I also love the cool dewy feel of the air. Yet, I am most thankful for a few moments of quiet. Mind you, this is not complete silence. Bird and insect song provide low background music, with occasional contributions from our barnyard animals. However, power tools and heavy equipment remain still. On work days that quiet moment may be limited to the few seconds walking from the front door to the car. At best, during the weeks surrounding summer solstice the day is only a dim glow of a promise on the eastern horizon. On days off I step outside while the night shadows are still in retreat, but before the sun appears. I feed and water the chickens and goats, and then wander into our small orchard to get a better view of the sky. Even on the more relaxed mornings it is not a lengthy exercise—a couple minutes at most. Regardless of length, it is in these quiet moments that I get oriented for the day. It is not a time for planning or agenda setting. That waits at least until I have returned to the house for the first cup of coffee and begin listening to radio news updates. Perhaps most importantly these brief quiet moments are a time to silence my own interior dialogue and take a breath. The night is done. The day has begun. Now I can move forward.

One of the biblical passages that come to mind during these moments is the story of Elijah at Horeb in I Kings 19. Earlier the prophet had twice confronted King Ahab of Israel for abandoning the worship of YHWH in favor of Baal. During the first encounter, Elijah announced a severe three year draught. Near the end of the draught he made a second appearance and proposed a contest between himself and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel to determine the true God. While the prophets of Baal failed to ignite their offering, Elijah's prayer to YHWH brought down fire that consumed both his waterlogged sacrifice and the altar itself. The amazed crowd--following Elijah's instruction--rounded up and slaughtered the prophets of Baal. As the primary sponsor of Baal worship in Israel, Ahab's wife Jezebel did not take kindly to the news. She responded by threatening Elijah's life. This led him to flee Israel in absolute terror, first to neighboring Judah, then a day's journey into the wilderness and finally all the way to Mount Horeb (also known as Mount Sinai).

There YHWH asks Elijah what he is doing. The prophet proclaims his allegiance to YHWH, but then complains about the faithlessness of Israel which has led to the deaths of other prophets and put a price on his own head. YHWH calls Elijah to come out of his cave and stand on the mountain. As YHWH passes by, the prophet observes wind, earthquake and fire, but God is not in these powerful phenomena. Rather, he experiences the divine presence in a still small voice. Once more YHWH asks Elijah what he is doing at Horeb and again the prophet repeats his complaint. This time YHWH points Elijah toward the future by commissioning him to appoint a new generation of leadership, but also reminding the despairing prophet that he is not alone. It is time to move forward.

Many years ago, while I attended Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida we learned that Iran/Contra Scandal figure Oliver North was scheduled to speak at a nearby political fundraiser. In response, several Dunker peace activists quickly organized a prayer vigil to be held that evening across the street from North's venue. Our planning included informing local police and on site security about the action. A couple of very brief speeches were made by respected members of our faith community, and perhaps a couple of hymns sung, but otherwise it was an appropriately quiet affair. Across the street young partisans had organized a rather loud counter demonstration. After a

while a few of the counter demonstrators crossed the street to talk with some of our leaders. We soon learned that rumors had been spread that we intended to burn flags and block North from entering the building. Our new friends, embarrassed by their former colleagues' behavior, sat with us for the remainder of the vigil. I'm reminded of a quote attributed to Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), "Preach the gospel always, and if necessary, use words."

Tom Wagner is a former pastor in the Church of the Brethren (Dunker) and serves MCCC as clerk and archivist. He can be contacted at gleanertw@hotmail.com.



From the Editor

The next *BRANCHES* will cover the months of September & October. If you have something you would like to have included, please e-mail to us at staff@cooperatingchurches.com or send it via snail mail. Please include a logo for your organization. Remember, I am unable to copy anything that is in a PDF format. The information is due into the office no later than August 22nd to be included in the next issue. If you no longer wish to receive *BRANCHES*, please let the office know and we will remove your name and address from our file.



Apostolic Church of God – Muskegon, 1163 Center St., Muskegon, MI 49442 will be hosting a Vacation Bible School beginning July 12th and continuing through July 15th. Saturday, July 15th – Noon-5pm is a picnic in Parslow Park. For more information call 231-777-4728.

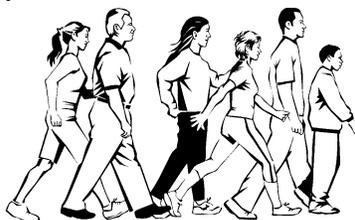
COMMUNITY
REMEMBRANCE

HARBOR
HOSPICE

The 4th Annual Community Remembrance at the Heritage Memorial Garden located in downtown Muskegon Thursday, September 21st beginning at 6pm is a program encompassing beautiful music, readings and bulbs planted to help individuals and families in our community to both mourn the death and honor the life of a loved one. Pam Babbitt developed the beautiful garden in honor of her late husband; a haven located in downtown Muskegon and an incredible representation of love that remains even after a person dies. An RSVP is kindly appreciated. Please call 231-728-3442 or 800-497-9559 for more details.



Presenting *Summer in Paradise* on the first day of the two-day hospice fundraiser being held on Friday, August 18th at 6:30pm. This is an evening gala held at The Event Center at Fricano Place in Muskegon, catered by Harris Hospitality, and sponsored by local businesses and individuals. This unique party includes an evening of amazing appetizers, cash bar, live entertainment by Black Circle Radio, silent and live auctions and raffle games. Join Harbor Hospice to support the racers participating in the Regatta the following day. On Saturday, August 19th the Harbor Hospice Regatta will take place. Celebrating its 10th year, this event features a sailing race. Registration opens at 11am. The public is welcome to come experience a fun and relaxing afternoon at the Muskegon Yacht Club, and join everyone for a picnic from Noon-5:30pm. This hugely popular race is part of the National Hospice Regatta Alliance that has raised more than \$23 million for hospice services across the country. West Michigan sailors love this race, and in the past 10 years have helped raise over \$300,000 to support local hospice care.



CROP Hunger Walk

Be a hunger fighter! The Team Leader's Meeting for the annual Muskegon CROP Hunger Walk happens soon. Join us at 7pm on Thursday, August 24 at Central United Methodist Church, 1101 2nd St., in downtown Muskegon. Get materials and information so your congregation or group can make life better for people around the world and right here in Muskegon County. Four great agencies benefit local: AgeWell Services' Meals-on-Wheels program, Community enCompass' Urban Farm, the Health Choice Pantry at Mission for Area People (MAP) and the Saturday Breakfast at First Congregational UCC. Be part of the hunger solution! Questions? Call 231-215-9110.



Strengthening Families Program with separate sessions for pre-teens/teens (ages 10-14) and parents, as well as combined family sessions is a video-based 7 week program with lots of activities! FREE family dinner & childcare (ages 1-9) provided as well. There are 7 sessions on Tuesday and Wednesdays, July 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, and August 1 from Noon-2:30 at the Muskegon Middle School, 1150 Amity Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49442. Call now to register! Contact Howard Matthews at 616-396-2301 ext. 145 or hmatthews@pathwaysmi.org.



LIGHT THE WAY

Light the Way is a program being offered through Michigan Interfaith Power & Light and Consumers Energy. Michigan Interfaith Power & Light in partnership with Consumers Energy is offering free energy upgrades to faith communities in several counties across Michigan. Over the past two years, Michigan Interfaith Power & Light has assisted 250+ congregations receiving an average of \$1,000 of directly installed energy efficiency upgrades (i.e. LED lighting, programmable thermostats, low-flow faucet aerators, etc.) saving each participating congregation an average of over \$500 a year on their gas and electric bills from these upgrades alone. Spending less on utilities means more for the important mission and ministry of Michigan's faith communities. Participation is limited on a first come, first served basis. For more information and to sign up, please visit <http://www.mipl.org/energy-efficiency/>



Attention, Bridge Card holders: Double-Up Food Bucks is back at your area's farmers' markets. When you use your Bridge Card at a participating farmers' market, the Double Up Food Bucks program will match you dollar for dollar with bonus funds – up to \$20 – that you can use in the market to buy more fresh, Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables. It's simple – spend up to \$20m on your Bridge Card at the market, and you'll get up to \$20 more, free, to spend on healthy, local foods. The following farmers' markets that participate in our area include Muskegon Farmers Market, Heights City Market, McLaughlin Grows Urban Farm, Grand Haven, Fremont, Spring Lake, Sparta, Nelson's Farm Market in Grant, Rennhack Orchard in Hart and the YMCA Veggie Van. You can check out the Bridge Card web site www.westmichiganfarmmarkets.org.



MCCC's BBQ Fundraiser has been postponed until (tentatively) Saturday, **September 9th**. Please watch for more details in the September/October BRANCHES.

Congratulations!

Muskegon Cooperating Churches would like to congratulate our former board member, Rev. Lily Marx on her ordination to the Sacred Order of Priests in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church to be held at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church on July 29th at 11:00am. A luncheon reception will follow at Verdoni's Event Center, 211 W. Seaway Drive, Muskegon.



It all starts on Wednesday, August 9th with Day Zero. Gates open at 4pm. This is a free admission day. The festival continues Thursday-Saturday. Gates open at 1pm. For more information contact www.unitymusicfestival.com or call 231-773-3361.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We would not exist without your generous support. Contributions have been received during the last 2 months from the following individuals: Lawrence & Julie Ayers, William & Avis Boelkins, Cindy Curran, Lynn Gordon & Jack Kennedy, Don Holtrop, Bill & Loyce Page, Joseph Singerling, Tom Tuori, and James & Nancy Waters. Congregations: Christ Temple Apostolic, Sacred Heart, Samuel Lutheran Church, St. Francis DeSales, and St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran.



July 4		INDEPENDENCE DAY
July 11 & 12	Noon-2:30	Strengthening Families, Muskegon Middle School, see pg. 4
July 12-15		VBS, Apostolic Church of God – Muskegon, see pg.3
July 18-19	Noon-2:30	Strengthening Families, Muskegon Middle School, see pg. 4
July 25-26	Noon-2:30	Strengthening Families, Muskegon Middle School, see pg. 4
July 27	5:00pm	MCCC Board of Directors' Meeting, Catholic Charities Bldg.
July 29	11:00am	Rev. Lily Marx's Ordination, St. Gregory's Episcopal, see pg. 6
August 1	Noon-2:30	Strengthening Families, Muskegon Middle School, see pg. 4
August 9	4:00pm	Gates open for "Zero Day" at Unity Music Festival, see pg. 6
August 10-12	1:00pm	Gates open for Unity Music Festival, Heritage Landing, see pg. 6
August 18	6:30pm	Summer in Paradise, Hospice Fundraiser, see pg. 4
August 19	Noon-5:30	Harbor Hospice Regatta, Muskegon Yacht Club, see pg. 4
August 21	2:30pm	Last day for information for Sept./Oct. Branches.
August 24	7:00pm	CROP Hunger Walk team leader's meeting, see pg. 4
August 24	5:00pm	MCCC Board of Directors' Meeting, Catholic Charities Bldg.
September 9 (tentative)		MCCC BBQ Fundraiser, details to be announced later
September 21	6:00pm	Hospice Community Remembrance, see pg. 3